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beat  (bēt)

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v. **beat**, **beat·en** (bēt n) or **beat**, **beat·ing**, **beats**

v.tr.

1.

a. To strike repeatedly.

b. To subject to repeated beatings or physical abuse; batter.

c. To punish by hitting or whipping; flog.

2.

a. To strike against repeatedly and with force; pound: *waves beating the shore*.

b. To flap (wings, for example).

c. To strike so as to produce music or a signal: *beat a drum*.

d. *Music* To mark or count (time or rhythm), especially with the hands or with a baton.

3.

a. To shape or break by repeated blows; forge: *beat the glowing metal into a dagger*.

b. To make by pounding or trampling: *beat a path through the jungle*.

4. To mix rapidly with a utensil: *beat two eggs in a bowl*.

5.

a. To defeat or subdue, as in a contest. See Synonyms at [defeat](#).

b. To force to withdraw or retreat: *beat back the enemy*.

c. To dislodge from a position: *I beat him down to a lower price*.

6. *Informal* To be superior to or better than: *Riding beats walking*.

7. *Slang* To perplex or baffle: *It beats me; I don't know the answer*.

8. *Informal*

a. To avoid or counter the effects of, often by thinking ahead; circumvent: *beat the traffic*.

b. To arrive or finish before (another): *We beat you home by five minutes*.

c. To deprive, as by craft or ability: *He beat me out of 20 dollars with his latest scheme*.

9. *Physics* To cause a reference wave to combine with (a second wave) so that the frequency of the second wave can be studied through time variations in the amplitude of the combination.

v.intr.

1. To inflict repeated blows.

2. To pulsate; throb.

3.

a. To emit sound when struck: *The gong beat thunderously*.

b. To strike a drum.

4. To flap repeatedly.

5. To shine or glare intensely: *The sun beat down on us all day*.

6. To fall in torrents: *The rain beat on the roof*.

7. To hunt through woods or underbrush in search of game.

8. *Nautical* To sail upwind by tacking repeatedly.

n.

1. A stroke or blow, especially one that produces a sound or serves as a signal.

2. A pulsation or throb.

3. *Physics* A variation in the amplitude of a wave, especially that which results from the superpositioning of two or more waves of different frequencies. When sound waves are combined, the beat is heard as a pulsation in the sound.

4. *Music*

- a. A steady succession of units of rhythm.
- b. A gesture used by a conductor to indicate such a unit.
- 5. A pattern of stress that produces the rhythm of verse.
- 6. A variable unit of time measuring a pause taken by an actor, as for dramatic effect.
- 7.
- a. The area regularly covered by a reporter, a police officer, or a sentry: *television's culture beat*.
- b. The reporting of a news item obtained ahead of one's competitors.
- 8. often **Beat** A member of the Beat Generation.

adj.

- 1. *Informal* Worn-out; fatigued.
- 2. often **Beat** Of or relating to the Beat Generation.

Phrasal Verbs:

beat off

- 1. To drive away.
- 2. *Vulgar Slang* To masturbate.

beat out

Baseball To reach base safely on (a bunt or ground ball) when a putout is attempted.

Idioms:

beat all

To be impressive or amazing. Often used in negative conditional constructions: *If that doesn't beat all!*

beat a retreat

To make a hasty withdrawal.

beat around/about the bush

To fail to confront a subject directly.

beat it *Slang*

To leave hurriedly.

beat the bushes

To make an exhaustive search.

beat the drum/drums

To give enthusiastic public support or promotion: *a politician who beats the drum for liberalism*.

beat up on

- 1. To attack physically.
- 2. To criticize or scold harshly.

to beat the band

To an extreme degree.

[Middle English *beten*, from Old English *bēaten*; see **bhau-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

Synonyms: beat, batter¹, buffet², hammer, pound², pummel, thrash

These verbs mean to hit heavily and repeatedly with violent blows: *beat each other with sticks; a ship battered by storm waves; buffeted him with her open palm; hammered his opponent with his fists; troops pounded by mortar fire; pummeled the bully soundly; dolphins thrashing the water with their tails*. See Also Synonyms at [defeat](#).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

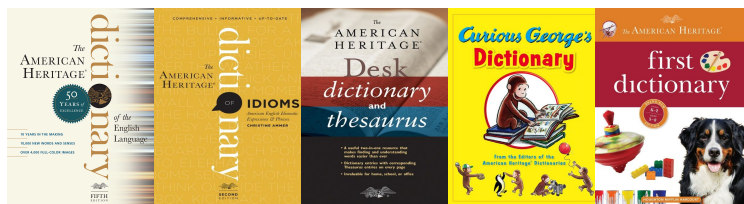
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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available

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